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Paper Types and Suggested Brands List

You can complete this course with only a pencil and regular paper, and a drawing area such as a desk or drawing board. However, we are including information on types of paper here, since it is helpful to know, in case you want to try drawing on other types of paper.

I use all kinds of paper, and I encourage you to experiment and explore the various papers that are available. Two companies that I often use are Canson paper and Strathmore paper.

Key Terms and Kinds of Paper

Weight – The weight of a paper refers to its thickness.

Newsprint – One type of paper I suggest using is newsprint pad 18”x24” rough (suggested brand: Strathmore 300 Series Newsprint Pads).

I use newsprint in a lot of the demos in this course. If you want the most economical choice, newsprint is a good, inexpensive paper.

Newsprint comes in smooth and rough. I personal use the rough paper. The rough paper has what is referred to as “tooth.” Tooth is the texture; the tooth grabs the drawing material (such as charcoal) and holds it. Besides newsprint, other types of paper have a “tooth” rating as well. Some paper has no or little tooth, there is medium-tooth paper, and there is rough paper. I suggest that beginners get the rougher paper, because I have found that many university students who are beginners struggle more with the smoother paper.

Mix Media – I also use a nicer paper, specifically mix media paper by Canson. Besides newsprint mentioned above, I also use mix media paper in this course as well as charcoal paper.

Note: On cheaper paper, it is not as big of a deal to use our fingers to blend or unify value, especially once we get a layer of charcoal on our fingers. However, the oil in our hands can negatively affect the paper, especially more expensive paper, so I do suggest using blending tools such as a stump when possible.

Cold Press and Hot Press – You might have heard of cold press and hot press paper or cold-pressed and hot-pressed paper. Hot-pressed paper has as smoother surface with almost no “tooth.” Paper made with the cold press process results in a paper that is somewhere between rough paper and hot-pressed paper. Hot-pressed paper has a smooth tooth and cold-pressed paper has a courser tooth. Cold-pressed paper It has a slight texture and is not a smooth as hot-pressed paper. So, many papers are available in rough, cold press, or hot press.

Rag Paper – I use a lot of 100% rag paper. A lot of these papers are made from cotton or linen fibers. I suggest Arches or Stonehenge as far as brand.